

- *Do you think the fiesta is in decadence?*

It is difficult for me to say if the fiesta is in decadence because I did not see the so called «Golden Age» of Joselito and Belmonte or even the period of Manolete and Arruza, but the old aficionados seem to agree that there is a certain monotony in the modern bullfight, which is caused by a standardization in the manner of fighting. This, however, has had little or no effect on the popularity of the bullfight in Spain, for there are more fights given now than ever before in the history of the spectacle (924 in the season of 1963). Today the attendance is better than even during the «Golden Age» when there were no television sets or other diversions such as football and films.

- *Who are your favorite bullfighters of the pass and the present?*

The matador I most admire, without ever having seen him and forming my opinion only from what I have read, is Pedro Romero. He fought for 28 years (1771 to 1799) as a matador and killed over 5,600 bulls without ever suffering a horn wound. He died of old age in 1839 in Ronda, the town of his birth.

- *Which bull ranches you like best?*

The ganaderias whose bulls have been most consistently good are Santa Coloma (Buendia) and Urquijo.

- *What's your opinion of the so-called «tremendismo?» For example, what do you think of «El Cordobés?»*

I do not particularly care for the style of bullfighting known as «tremendismo;» however, I feel that it is important to the other all picture of the fiesta, for it serves

as a contrast to the artistic and dominating styles. One style offsets the other and they all help make the *corridos* more interesting. Every bullfighter has his public. *El Cordobés'* style is quite fantastic, and although I personally do not care for it, it is admirable for many reasons. The most obvious being his proximity to the horns during most of the *faena* with the *muleta* and his sense of responsibility to a paying audience, which makes him try to do his best in every fight.

- *Do you believe bullfighting is more brutal than boxing?*

Certainly not. Bullfighting today survives as the only contest in which man and wild beast actually confront each other in mortal combat on anything like even terms. The festival of the bulls today reflects the struggle of man's survival from the beginnings of time when he had to hunt and kill bulls for food and clothing. It hints at the dangerous game of skill and beauty which took on a religious meaning in the athletic dances of Crete. The *corrida* has much of the Mithraic sacrifices, the Taurobolium with their blood baptism and high priests dressed in ceremonial robes. The fiesta of the bulls is a reflection of ancient cultures and religions which in such a standardized and modern world as ours is indeed an interesting spectacle to behold. When you see a brave bull, faced by a man who does nothing that is dishonorable and vulgar with it, then you will also begin to understand the essence of «la fiesta brava».

- *How did you become interested in painting?*

I have always liked to draw and



paint. I studied art in high school and later won a four year scholarship to study at the Philadelphia Museum College of Art. From this school I was awarded a scholarship to the Instituto Allende in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, where I learned more about bullfighting. It was while I was studying art in Mexico that I fought and killed my first bull. Since I have been in Spain I have had four exhibitions; one in Salamanca 1962, two in the Seville Ateneo 1962 and 1963, and one in Madrid in March of 1964.

- *You use bull's blood in your painting. How do you use it? What technique do you use?*

Since the beginning of time men have been killing and painting bulls. In Paleolithic days, after the bull had been killed, the primitive matadors often painted hunt scenes on cave walls, using the animal's blood for their media. Since I am a killer of bulls as well as a painter, it did not seem unnatural that I should use that media. The blood is mixed with an anticoagulate, and the technique is the same as that used with water color.

- *Who are your favorite painters?*
- *Do you think Hemingway, Barnaby Conrad and other American authors who have written about the fiesta have helped Americans understand it better?*

Yes.

